



The Storm Water Management Charge

The Storm Water Management Charge is a tool for communities to invest in reducing pollution from storm water runoff. Storm water is water from rain and melting snow that flows off roofs, driveways, parking lots, playgrounds, streets, and other hard, or impervious, surfaces. The water washes industrial chemicals, gas, oil, antifreeze, road salt, detergents, pesticides, pet waste, and other pollutants into storm drains. The storm drains dump the polluted water, without treating it, directly into Lake Michigan and local rivers. Storm water is the largest polluter of streams, rivers, and lakes. Storm Water Management monies pay for projects to prevent storm water pollution of natural waterways and to operate and maintain storm sewers.

The Storm Water Management Charge was introduced in the 2006 City of Milwaukee budget. Previously, the costs for city sewers, including storm and sanitary sewers, were covered by sewer charges based on drinking water use.

The Storm Water Management Charge distributes the cost of storm water programs to non-profit and tax-exempt organizations, and non-residential and commercial property owners with multiple buildings, parking lots, and paved surfaces. The charge applies to all properties, occupied or vacant, and empty lots.

The charge appears on the Milwaukee Municipal Services Bill administered by the Milwaukee Water Works.

The charge is based on the amount of impervious surface area of a property. A typical residential property has an average impervious surface area of 1,610 square feet. This measurement is called an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). The number of ERUs for non-residential, commercial developed property and vacant, improved property is calculated by dividing the impervious surface area of the property by 1,610.

Residential buildings (house, apartment, condominium) with one to four units were billed for 2009 at \$8.66 the first quarter and \$12.87 the remaining three quarters for an annual rate of \$11.82 per quarter.

The charge for commercial property, including buildings with more than four residential units, is based on the amount of hard surface area of the property. Calculate the number of ERUs for a property by dividing the square footage of hard surface of the property by 1,610. The 2009 charge was billed at \$8.66 per ERU for the first quarter and billed \$12.87 per ERU for the remaining three quarters for an annualized rate of \$11.82 per ERU per quarter. For commercial customers billed monthly, the 2009 charge was billed the first quarter at \$2.88 per ERU per month, and billed the final three quarters at \$4.29 per ERU per month for an annualized rate of \$11.82 per ERU per quarter.

Condominium associations are charged based on the amount of hard surface area of the entire property. The charge is billed quarterly to the condominium association.

My residential property has more than four dwelling units. What is the charge?

Residential properties with more than four units are considered commercial developed property when calculating the charge.

How are condominium charged?

Condominium associations are charged based on the amount of impervious surface area of the entire property. Calculate the number of ERUs for the property by dividing the impervious surface area of the property by 1,610. The charge is billed quarterly to the condominium association.

What is an "improved" property?

An improved property is a parcel of land that has a building on it and/or any impervious surface, such as a paved parking area and sidewalks.

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Where does the Storm Water Management Charge appear?

The charge appears on the Municipal Services Bill as a separate line item. The billing unit, ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit) is shown, along with the total charge. The city does not bill fractions of an ERU.

Why is the charge on my "water bill"?

The Municipal Services Bill includes charges for drinking water, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) sewerage treatment, and certain municipal services provided in the City of Milwaukee. It is more cost-effective to include all charges on one bill rather than to issue multiple bills. The Milwaukee Water Works manages the billing and forwards the collected charges to the city treasurer for distribution to city departments and the MMSD.

I never received a "Municipal Services Bill" before. Why am I receiving one now?

The City of Milwaukee now has the capability to charge properties that receive city services but no water or sewer service. Previously, only those receiving water and sewer service paid local sewerage charges and snow and ice control charges. New accounts were established for properties that previously were exempt from city service charges.

How do I appeal the Storm Water Management Charge if I believe it was incorrectly calculated or charged to my property?

City ordinance established a flat fee for residential properties, so there is no appeal process for residential properties. Appeals are available for non-residential and commercial developed property and vacant improved property. To appeal a Storm Water Management charge, telephone the Milwaukee Water Works Customer Service Center, (414) 286-2830, and leave your name, property address, telephone number, and if available, an email address. The Water Works will forward your appeal to the Department of Public Works for investigation.

If I am a tenant of the property, can I be held responsible for payment of the Storm Water Management Charge?

Your payment responsibility is determined by the terms of your lease, which is a private agreement between you and your landlord. The city is not a party to the lease, and will not become involved in a disagreement between landlord and tenant. The landlord or property owner is responsible for payment of the charge if the tenant fails to pay under terms of the lease.

What happens to unpaid Storm Water Management Charges?

If charges for this service remain unpaid for two or more billing quarters, the charges will be transferred to the property tax account in September and are a lien against the property.

Do tax-exempt properties, such as churches, non-profit organizations, and government-owned properties pay the Storm Water Management Charge?

All properties are charged for use of the city storm sewers, including properties that are otherwise exempt from paying property taxes.

I'm selling my house. How do I transfer responsibility for the Storm Water Management Charge and other charges to the new owner?

The Storm Water Management Charges billed to a property sold after July 1, 2006 are the responsibility of the new owner and are handled in the same manner as all current charges (drinking water, sewer, solid waste, snow and ice charge). If a property is sold mid-quarter, for example, the total bill is prorated according to the time of sale so seller and buyer split the cost.

Para una explicación en Español por favor llame (414) 286-2830.

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